

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 18, 2005

**For More Information Contact**

Jeff Caldwell (804) 864-7008

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ANNOUNCES NERVE AGENT  
ANTIDOTE SUPPLIES NOW AVAILABLE STATEWIDE**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) announced today that as part of its ongoing public health preparedness efforts, antidotes for common nerve agents have been delivered to selected hospitals and emergency first responder facilities across the Commonwealth. The antidotes are supplied by the Strategic National Stockpile CHEMPACK Project.

“The CHEMPACK Project provides Virginia with a sustainable, reliable resource of treatment supplies for nerve agent exposure,” said State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. “Virginia will be better equipped to care for people exposed to a nerve agent in the unlikely event of an attack or emergency,” said Dr. Stroube.

Nerve agents are chemicals that interfere with the nervous system. Sarin, soman, tabun and VX are examples of nerve agents that all have similar effects.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the CHEMPACK Project to put nerve agent antidote supplies in localities throughout the nation in advance of an event. This will speed response in the unlikely event of a nerve agent release, and will better prepare emergency responders to treat any patients exposed to these chemicals.

CHEMPACK containers will be installed throughout the United States. Each container will have enough material to treat approximately 1,000 people. The total number of containers provided to each state or bio-terrorism project area is based on population. Local health district emergency planners are working with community, hospital and emergency management partners to develop plans and procedures for the delivery of supplies to potential emergency locations.

Due to security issues, information about the location and number of CHEMPACK containers will not be publicly disclosed.

“Virginia’s continued preparedness efforts are designed to protect the safety and well-being of all its citizens,” said Stroube.

For more information about nerve agents and VDH Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs, visit the VDH Web site at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epr/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epr/)

###